

# Notes From The Field: *NW*

## Pre-Season Report 8/29/18

**UPDATE:** Since biologist have turned in some information we have received significant rain across the state between 8/27/18 - 8/29/18. Please be sure to check your areas out before hunting them in the early season as some places may no longer be accessible anymore.

*Was this helpful? Let us know by taking this [3 question survey](#).*

### **Iron**

Regarding duck broods, we have observed similar numbers compared to previous years for mallards, wood ducks, blue-winged teal and other ducks. Canada Goose production seemed similar to previous years as well. For total number of birds, we expect similar numbers to previous years in the area. Our area has experienced normal rainfall this year, so water levels are normal in our area. Aquatic food availability is similar as well with milfoil, pondweed, and wild rice being our top wetland foods on the landscape. Very little agriculture in Iron County but alfalfa/hay seem to be slightly behind a typical year.

#### ***Current summer big projects:***

- 1) Gile Flowage dam will receive a culvert replacement in late summer/early fall.
- 2) Little Turtle Flowage saw a drawdown and cattail burn which opened up water

#### ***Drawdowns that might affect hunters:***

None

### **Burnett**

Regarding duck broods, we have observed similar numbers compared to previous years for blue-winged teal and wood ducks. Mallards seemed to have had good production this year as we observed more broods this year compared to prior years. Canada Goose broods however seemed fewer than in previous year in our area, likely do to the late snow we received in April. For total number of birds, we expect similar numbers compared to previous years in the area. Our area has experienced similar rainfall when compared to prior years, so water levels are normal in the area. Aquatic food availability is normal with wild rice being our top wetland food on the landscape. We would also like to note a good acorn crop that wood ducks may target. Crop harvest in the area seems similar to previous years for corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa/hay.

#### ***Current summer big projects:***

- 1) Large structure replacement in the Crex refuge in early June. The flowage had been drawn down for 2 years but is now holding water.

#### ***Drawdowns that might affect hunters:***

Phantom flowage, which is the largest flowage on Crex was drawn down this year. We will plan to start refilling in Sept.

## **Price**

Regarding duck broods, we have observed similar numbers compared to previous years for mallards and other ducks. Wood ducks seemed to have had good production this year as we saw more broods this year compared to previous years. We saw fewer broods for blue-winged teal though this year. Canada Goose broods seemed to have similar brood numbers as previous years as well. For total number of birds, we expect similar numbers compared to previous years in the area. Our area has experienced similar rain fall when compared to previous years, so water levels are normal. Aquatic food availability is normal with wild rice, small tubers, and macroinvertebrates being our top wetland foods on the landscape. Crop harvest in the area seems similar to previous years for corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa/hay in our area as well.

### ***Current summer big projects:***

- 1) Winter drawdown of two flowages last year on Spring Creek Wildlife Area to promote wild rice production.

### ***Drawdowns that might affect hunters:***

Starting drawdowns of Spring Creek Wildlife Area flowage 1 and Beaver Creek Flowage on Kimberly Clark Wildlife Area the week of September 10th. These will be full winter drawdowns for rice habitat improvement.

## **St. Croix/Pierce**

Regarding duck broods, we have observed similar numbers compared to previous years for mallards, wood ducks and blue-winged teal. Canada goose and other duck production seemed lower than previous years though. For total number of birds, we expect similar numbers to previous years in the area. Our area has experienced dry conditions this year, so water levels are lower in our area. Aquatic food availability is similar as well with arrowhead, smartweed and other submersed aquatics being our top wetland foods on the landscape. Crop harvest in the area seems ahead in corn and similar in soybeans. Compared to previous years wheat and alfalfa/hay seems to be behind.

### ***Current summer big projects:***

- 1)None

### ***Drawdowns that might affect hunters:***

No intentional drawdowns, but wetlands are drying up fast creating a lot of mudflats and concentrating food resources.

## **Statewide**

Wisconsin statewide outlook for this season looks similar to previous years. Brood counts seem average for mallards, blue-winged teal, wood ducks and other ducks. Canada Goose numbers however seem to have been affected statewide due to the late snowfall we received in April that may affected our nesting geese. Late snowstorms in April set nesting back and caused a lot of first attempt failures across the state. Water levels across the state are variable with many places being near normal, with exceptions in southern and central Wisconsin. Southern Wisconsin has seen almost daily rainfall starting mid-August making water levels considerably higher than normal. Central Wisconsin on the other hand has been very dry with wildlife staff reporting almost drought like conditions. Wetland food across the state seems to be

similar to previous years and crop harvest also seems to be similar in most areas with corn being slightly ahead of a normal year.

To be successful we encourage all of you to get out and scout before your hunting trips. Waterfowl hunters in Wisconsin have shown that hunters who scout 3 times before hunting shoot three times as many birds. It will be important also to check your spots out before hunting as some spots may not be huntable due to high water.

Be safe and happy hunting!

**5 Important things to know:**

1. North duck zone will open one week later than in previous years, resulting in a single statewide opener for the North, South and Mississippi zones on Sept. 29;
2. Elimination of the Horicon Canada goose Management Zone (resulting in a single statewide regular goose zone);
3. Increase in the daily Canada goose bag limit to three birds per day and there is a second split in the Southern Canada goose zone resulting in a goose season that is open during the Christmas and New Year's holidays; and
4. Canada goose hunters, registration of Canada geese and in-field validation of the Canada goose hunting permit is no longer required.
5. Check out [The Basics of Waterfowl Hunting in Wisconsin](#) document on the [Waterfowl Hunting](#) webpage along with other useful tools in our Hunter resources tab for a few tips and tricks!

If you have any questions, please contact Trenton Rohrer WDNR Assistant Migratory Game Bird Ecologist send him an email or call.

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